

(c) *Relevant training and experience.* Reviewers will be selected based upon training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields taking into account the following factors:

(1) Level of relevant formal scientific, technical education, and extension experience of the individual, as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research, education, or extension activities.

(2) Need to include as reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, and extension fields.

(3) Need to include as reviewers other experts (e.g., producers, range or forest managers/operators, and consumers) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs.

(4) Need to include as reviewers experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, State and Federal agencies, private profit and nonprofit organizations) and geographic locations.

(5) Need to maintain a balanced composition of reviewers with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution.

(6) Need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness to producers and the general public of each application.

(d) *Confidentiality.* The identities of reviewers will remain confidential to the maximum extent possible. Therefore, the names of reviewers will not be released to applicants. If it is possible to reveal the names of reviewers in such a way that they cannot be identified with the review of any particular application, this will be done at the end of the fiscal year or as requested. Names of submitting institutions and individuals, as well as application content and peer evaluations, will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. Reviewers are expected to be in compliance with CSREES Confidentiality Guidelines. Reviewers provide this assurance through PRS.

(e) *Conflicts of interest.* During the evaluation process, extreme care will be taken to prevent any actual or per-

ceived conflicts of interest that may impact review or evaluation. For the purpose of determining conflicts of interest, the academic and administrative autonomy of an institution shall be determined. Reviewers are expected to be in compliance with CSREES Conflict-of-Interest Guidelines. Reviewers provide this assurance through PRS.

§ 3430.34 Evaluation criteria.

(a) *General.* To ensure any project receiving funds from CSREES is consistent with the broad goals of the funding program, the content of each proposal/application submitted to CSREES will be evaluated based on a pre-determined set of review criteria. It is the responsibility of the Program Officer to develop, adopt, adapt, or otherwise establish the criteria by which proposals are to be evaluated. It may be appropriate for the Program Officer to involve other scientists or stakeholders in the development of criteria, or to extract criteria from legislative authority or appropriations language. The review criteria are described in the RFA and shall not include criteria concerning any cost sharing or matching requirements per section 103(a)(3) of AREERA (7 U.S.C. 7613(a)(3)).

(b) *Guidance for reviewers.* In order that all potential applicants for a program have similar opportunities to compete for funds, all reviewers will receive from the Program Officer a description of the review criteria. Reviewers are instructed to use those same evaluation criteria, and only those criteria, to judge the merit of the proposals they review.

§ 3430.35 Review of noncompetitive applications.

(a) *General.* Some projects are directed by either authorizing legislation and/or appropriations to specifically support a designated institution or set of institutions for particular research, education, or extension topics of importance to the nation, a State, or a region. Although these projects may be awarded noncompetitively, these projects or activities are subject to the same application process, award terms and conditions, Federal assistance laws and regulations, reporting and monitoring requirements, and post-award

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administration and closeout policies and procedures as competitive Federal assistance programs. The only difference is these applications are not subject to a competitive peer or merit review process at the Agency level.

(b) *Requirements.* All noncompetitive applications recommended for funding are required to be reviewed by the program officer and, as required, other Departmental and CSREES officials; and the review documented by the CSREES program officer. For awards recommended for funding at or greater than \$10,000, an independent review and a unit review by program officials are required.

§ 3430.36 Procedures to minimize or eliminate duplication of effort.

CSREES may implement appropriate business processes to minimize or eliminate the awarding of CSREES Federal assistance that unnecessarily duplicates activities already being sponsored under other awards, including awards made by other Federal agencies. Business processes may include the review of the Current and Pending Support Form; documented CRIS searches prior to award; the conduct of PD workshops, conferences, meetings, and symposia; and agency participation in Federal Government-wide and other committees, taskforces, or groups that seek to solve problems related to agricultural research, education, and extension and other activities delegated to the CSREES Administrator.

§ 3430.37 Feedback to applicants.

Copies of individual reviews and/or summary reviews, not including the identity of reviewers, will be sent to the applicant PDs after the review process has been completed.

Subpart D—Award

§ 3430.41 Administration.

(a) *General.* Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the CSREES ADO shall make Federal assistance awards to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in the RFA. The date specified by the CSREES ADO as

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the effective date of the award shall be no later than September 30th of the Federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. It should be noted that the project need not be initiated on the award effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period. All funds awarded by CSREES shall be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are awarded in accordance with the approved application and budget, the regulations, the terms and conditions of the award, the applicable Federal cost principles, and the Department's assistance regulations (e.g., parts 3015, 3016, and 3019 of 7 CFR).

(b) *Notice of Award.* The notice of award document (i.e., Form CSREES–2009, Award Face Sheet) will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the following:

(1) Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to whom the Administrator has awarded a grant or cooperative agreement.

(2) Title of project.

(3) Name(s) and institution(s) of Project Director(s).

(4) Identifying award number assigned by CSREES or the Department.

(5) Project period.

(6) Total amount of CSREES financial assistance approved.

(7) Legal authority(ies) under which the grant or cooperative agreement is awarded.

(8) Appropriate CFDA number.

(9) Approved budget plan (that may be referenced).

(10) Other information or provisions (including the Terms and Conditions) deemed necessary by CSREES to carry out its respective awarding activities or to accomplish the purpose of a particular grant or cooperative agreement.

§ 3430.42 Special award conditions.

(a) *General.* CSREES may, with respect to any award, impose additional conditions prior to or at the time of any award when, in the judgment of CSREES, such conditions are necessary to ensure or protect advancement of